



VOLCANO - Project Results – Presentation on Multiplier Event 21. September 2017, Oslo, Norway

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Relevance

The current headlines tell their story. Three days ago, this was on the front page of a Norwegian newspaper. «Slår alarm om mangel på sykepleiere». The article reports about an alarming scarcity of nurses in care homes in Oslo. It's not only that there are far too few nurses working in the institutions. The recruitment of nurses to elderly care is going in the wrong direction. Very few nurses want to work in care homes, and a significant number of educated nurses give up their career after a few years. It is estimated that Norway within 2035 will need 30.000 more nurses, and even more nurse assistants, due to the demographic development in our European countries.

2) Yesterday's paper told this story: «Nå sloss kommunene om flyktningene»: The municipalities of Norway are fighting over the refugees and want more of them to settle in their municipalities. Why? Because they get payback for them, and also because they are needed in the local workforce.

Work and Integration

Work is repeatedly said to be the most important arena for integration. It makes the migrants financially independent and also contributes to their own and the common welfare. It benefits their mental and physical health and gives them the opportunity to strengthen social relations and language skills.

This project – the VOLCANO project - is about integration and about creating a win-win situation for both society and the immigrants themselves.

The Importance of Qualification

Generally speaking, the employment rate for migrants is lower than the average employment rate for native citizens, although this varies from country to country. There are also significant differences between different groups of migrants.

We need to focus more on the benefits of immigrants for our societies, both in terms of an increased work force, but also on the new perspectives, ideas and experience that migrants bring to their new homes.

Recent research, for instance from Norway, show the need for qualification of migrants in order for them to be relevant for employers.

Language acquisition is a key to entering the work force, and to become an active member of the society you live in.

What kind of language training leads to intergration in work life?

How can we build a bridge between language training in educational institutions and working life?

Demography in Europe

Many European countries have a growing migrant population.

The demographic picture of European countries also tells a story of an ageing population. There is certainly a need for a sustainable working force in the health and care sector.

Within the three years that have passed since this project was initiated, the relevance of it has been proved. Not the large number of refugees who need to be integrated in European societies shows the necessity to work out good and sustainable solutions. The need for more personell in the health and care workforce is acute because of the demographic picture.

Pilot Courses and Work Placements

In five countries – Norway, Scotland, Italy, Germany, and Croatia – we ran pilot courses for migrants aiming to work in the health care sector. Altogether 174 migrants participated in the courses during Spring 2017. Before the courses, we ran a benchmarking procedure for potential candidates, a test of hard and soft skills – containing a language test, a record of education and professional background and an interview about motivation for working in the health and care sector. The participants should be on a A2-B1 level of language to be admitted to the course.

The pilot courses were 90 hours long. (We have now extended the Norwegian version to 100 – “Helt I 100”). The content of the courses aimed at empowerment, providing the participants with relevant work oriented vocabulary, key words and concepts, communicative strategies, knowledge of routines and vital techniques in the sector, writing a

CV and applications, networking, visits to care homes, practical skills, etc. All was adjusted to the needs of the participants and with scaffolding as a major pedagogic approach.

We also put some effort into helping the participants with a work placement or applying for jobs. This was not funded by the EU, but was initially meant to be part of the programme as a whole, though adjusted to the situation in each country. Overall, those places where we managed to carry this through, we had very good results.

Results

Before the pilot course many of the participants reported that they had lost their motivation for learning the language and felt discouraged or a sense of hopelessness in front of the job application process. Several had already experienced many setbacks – not getting an answer from employers, not being invited to interviews, problems having their qualifications acknowledged, etc.

After the course, a majority reported significantly more confidence, mental wellbeing, as well as increased motivation for learning the language and applying for jobs.

The whole programme – the benchmarking, the content and execution of the courses and the work placements – proved fertile.

The results differ between the countries, but all in all the results are highly above our expectations.

For example, Scotland had 50 participants, and out of these 11 got a job after the course and 29 a job placement.

During the 6 week course in Norway, out of 26 participants, 16 got a job or a work placement and 5 got their authorisation as nurses or nurse assistants.

10 % of Germany's 36 participants have started vocational training in the care field.

21 of Italy's 30 participants are presently employed.

And finally, 5 of Croatia's 33 participants have got a work placement. Worth to mention - this was the first course of this kind ever held in Croatia.

Why Did it Work?

The language training was work oriented, relevant and focussed more than anything on strategies for understanding and communication. It gave the participants tools so that they were empowered and encouraged to seek work – or more education or improve their language skills – and a belief that they can make it.

Through the visits in care homes a connection was established between the school environment and the work place. They learned where jobs are to be found and some of the key things they should be able to handle from day 1 at work. Training on writing an

application, CV and job interviews helped them to perform better and become more independent. They saw others succeed, and established a supporting network within the group.

A Gentle Push

In short, the course provided a bridge that is needed between migrants and employers. The work place is repeatedly said to be a major arena for language acquisition and integration. We agree. But we cannot expect employers and employees in for instance a care home to do all the work. New employees need to be prepared in order to succeed. It does not necessarily have to be a very long programme or course. Ideally it should be a flexible model where the duration and content could be adjusted to the needs of the migrant and the sector. Some only need a gentle push and do not want to waste more time than necessary before making the leap. The VOLCANO course has the potential of being a successful contribution to integration in this manner.